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**Hope Sees Envoy  
 Of Hanoi in Laos;  
 Seeks P.O.W. Deal**

NYTimes

BANGKOK, Thailand, Dec. 23 (UPI) — Bob Hope made a surprise visit to Vientiane, Laos, today to discuss with North Vietnamese officials the possibility of going to Hanoi to try to negotiate the release of American prisoners of war in a \$10-million charity arrangement.

The comedian, who is traveling with his 75-man annual

Christmas show, said on his return here that he had conferred for an hour and 20 minutes with Nguyen Van Tran, first secretary of the North Vietnamese Embassy in Vientiane, and had asked if Mr. Tran would "arrange a visa for me."

"He said he would have to get in touch with the Foreign Minister and he would let me know," Mr. Hope said.

"I think I could make them a proposition—a financial proposition," said Mr. Hope, whose personal wealth has been estimated at about \$450-million.

Asked how much money would be involved, he replied,

"I was thinking in the neighborhood of \$10-million." Mr. Hope said that he could put on a charity show in the United States to raise the money and then turn it over to a North Vietnamese children's charity, rather than offer a direct ransom for the American prisoners.

The United States Embassy here declined to comment on Mr. Hope's visit. "If anything is going to be said about it, it will come from Hope," an Embassy spokesman said.

**Comment in Washington**

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23—Government officials said today

that while they were not informed in advance of Bob Hope's private efforts to win the release of United States prisoners of war, he was free to pursue them.

Gerald Warren, deputy White House press secretary, told newsmen that President Nixon had not been told of Mr. Hope's journey to Laos, although the President and the entertainer are old friends.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers, at a news conference, said that while the State Department had not been informed, United States officials in Bangkok had helped Mr.

Hope arrange his trip to Vientiane, where he conferred with a North Vietnamese official.